



Envision a World without Violence

Working with Challenging Issues

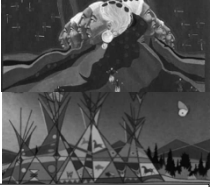


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Women surviving

Every transitional housing program will end up working with real people experiencing real life difficulties. Depending on the program, staff will have a small window of opportunity to make a difference in their lives.

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Multiple / repeat incidents of violence




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The survivor

- They do not cause the violence they experience and unfortunately often live with the violence over a lengthy period of time.
- One woman may find she is able to get out of the situation quickly while the next person will find herself caught in a web of violence that makes it difficult to get out.
- Studies show that potential lethality significantly rises when victims of domestic violence make a decision to leave the relationship or actually leave the relationship. (Roent, O'Sullivan, Webster, & Campbell, 2005)



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Problematic program response

- Some programs have attempted to limit the numbers of time a person can receive services; while this might be an attempt at managing limited resources it is also a dangerous practice.
 - ✓ What we know about domestic violence is that the violence escalates over time.
 - ✓ As practitioners reach a level of frustration from working with the same victim/survivor over time, the dangerousness of the situation is also increasing.

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Sister Space

- Programs will want to examine their practices in working with survivors who are repeat service recipients
 - ✓ Explore how you can enhance your advocacy response to counter the increased risks that are mounting.

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Addressing alcohol/drug abuse

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Complex challenges

- The survivor may be using alcohol as a coping mechanism or might be alcohol or drug dependent.
- On dry reservations or in dry communities, being intoxicated can become a barrier to seeking legal resources when being abused by their spouse or having been sexually assaulted.
- Tribal or program leadership may want to create rules to regulate and closely monitor alcohol and drug use

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Sister Space strategies

- Create a relationship with each survivor to create opportunity to work with them and help them understand how alcohol and drug use is problematic and creates risk
- Build relationships with the local alcohol & drug program staff
 - ✓ Help advocates learn about how to raise issues they see related to alcohol and drug use
 - ✓ Make appropriate referrals to programs when a woman is ready to take that important step. The advocate will then be ready to assist with accessing the resources that are most helpful to the survivor wanting to address their alcohol or drug use.
- Educate staff about the local laws and rules related to alcohol and drug use to be able to help remove barriers to accessing criminal justice resources in developing safety for survivors.

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Relationships and personal connections

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Complex challenges

- Relationships
 - ✓ the victim seeking assistance is the advocate's sister
 - ✓ the abuser of a survivor in the program is related to a person with significant authority within the tribe (tribal council member, tribal court judge, tribal chief of police, etc.)
- These different relationships can present problematic perceptions
 - ✓ Favoritism in providing financial resources to a family member
 - ✓ Fear of interference from persons of authority

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Sister Space strategies

Clearly developed policies to protect the ability of the transitional housing to respond to survivors in need.

- Most tribes require policies be approved by their tribal leadership, these policies offer protection for the staff to act in a manner in the best of interest of the survivor and not at the will of an individual in authority.
- The policies provide guidance needed to ensure how the transitional housing responds to relatives seeking services.
- It is important policies are questioning how it will impact the survivor seeking assistance to ensure they are receiving effective services that are consistent with services and resources being provided to non-relatives.

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Policy development

- Describe the challenging policy area(s) you are addressing.
 - ✓ What makes this a challenging issue for the shelter/transitional housing program?
 - ✓ What is the intent behind this policy? What do you want the policy to achieve?
 - ✓ What will you do to address this challenging issue?
 - ✓ What resources will help you address the challenging issue?
- How does what you are doing carry your vision and values?
 - ✓ Affirm the sacredness of women?
 - ✓ Recognize and support survivor sovereignty?
 - ✓ Adhere to absolute confidentiality?
 - ✓ Centralize survivor safety?
 - ✓ Guided by voices of victims/survivors?

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